

Diagnosis Revenge

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Category: Diagnosis Murder

Genre: Drama

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-01-31 08:00:00

Updated: 2000-01-31 08:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 11:51:21

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 10,154

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Mark and Madison are interrupted during a romantic weekend by someone out for revenge against Steve.

Diagnosis Revenge

DIAGNOSIS REVENGE

>Synopsis: Mark and Madison are interrupted during a romantic getaway by someone
out for revenge against Steve.

>All disclaimers apply. Rated PG13.
Jack's Bar and Grill/West LA

>Lenny Defranco walked over to the dark corner table carrying a briefcase and sat
down, "Are you Mr. X?" "That's me," answered the tall slender man, dressed in

>black, wearing dark sunglasses, "You must be Mr. Defranco. What can I do for
you?" A waitress moves over to their table, "May I get you gentlemen something

>to drink?" "I'll take a whiskey sour," said Mr. Defranco. "I'll have a shot of
tequila with lime," replied Mr. X. As she walked away, Mr. Defranco said,

>"There's someone I'd like for you to kill for me but first I want him to suffer
for awhile." "Who's my target?" asked Mr. X as the waitress returned with two

>drinks and placed them on the table. As she walked away, Mr. Defranco handed
Mr.X a picture and replied, "Mark Sloan. He's a doctor at Community General

>Hospital. His son is a lieutenant with the police department. Lt. Sloan arrested
my father a few months ago for suspicion of murder and he was denied bond. For

>two months my father was beaten and tortured in jail and the cops wouldn't do
anything about it. Finally two weeks ago my father was stabbed to death in his

>cell. Now I want Lt. Sloan to know what it's like for his dad to be tortured and
killed. I want you to kidnap Dr. Sloan, beat the hell out of him, take some

>pictures of him and then call me and I'll tell you how to get them to me. Just
don't kill him until I give you the final word." "No

problem," said Mr. X, "but
>it's gonna cost you. Since I'll be on this project for a week or
two, I'm gonna
need a quarter of a million dollars." "It's worth
it to me. I'll give you half
>the money today and the other half when the job is finished," Mr.
Defranco said
as he handed Mr. X an envelope. Mr. X took the
envelope and thumbed thru the
>money, downed his shot of tequila, bit his lime, stood up and said,
"It'll be a
pleasure doing business with you," and left.

>"Steve, have you seen my sun glasses? I just had them 10 minutes
ago," Mark
asked. Steve laughed as he walked over to Mark and
replied, "Dad there right
>here on top of your head," as he took the glasses off Mark's head
and handed
them to him. Mark laughed and scratched his head, "I
guess I'm just a little
>anxious and nervous about this weekend." "Dad, you're gonna have a
great time
this weekend. You and Madison have known each other
for quite awhile now and
>you've been dating for at least six weeks. I think it's great that
you two are
getting away for a long weekend together." "I know
you're right Steve, it's just
>been awhile since I've done anything like this," Mark replied as he
continued
gathering last minute things to take with him. "Dad
just go and enjoy each
>other's company and whatever happens happens," Steve said as he
walked towards
the door with his father then continued, "Aren't
you suppose to pick Madison up
>at the hospital?" "Yes and I'm late. If you need me, call me on my
cell phone.
We'll be somewhere on Cypress Ridge Mountain. Or you
can call Eric Davis at the
>lodge office and he'll know which cabin we're in," Mark said as he
grabbed his
heavy coat from the coat rack and headed for the car.
"Have a good time dad,"
>Steve said as he smiled and waved goodbye to Mark.
At the
hospital, Mark parked his car and went inside to find Madison. As he
>approached her office, he saw her bags outside the door. As he
entered the
office he waved to Madison who was sitting at her
desk on the phone. She smiled
>and held up one finger and mouthed the words "One minute" to Mark.
He returned
the smile and nodded his head in understanding.

>Mr. X was hanging out at the hospital looking for Mark. He spotted
him when he
walked in the door and followed him down the hall and
watched him go into an
>office, keeping his distance, not drawing attention to himself. He
stopped a few
doors down from the office Mark entered and waited
for him to come out.
>Jesse and Amanda walked up to Madison's office and spoke to Mark.
Mark said,
"Hey guys. You've come along at just the right time.
It looks like Maddie is
>taking everything but the kitchen sink, so I need help getting these
bags out to
the car." "I heard that Mark. I was a Girl Scout you
know and I feel it's best
>to be prepared for anything," Madison remarked as she hung up the
phone and
headed towards the door. She continued, "Besides, I'm
not sure what kind of
>accommodations to expect. It is a cabin in the mountains and it's
been my
experience that some can be pretty rustic." Amanda said,

"Come on Jesse. Let's help these two get these bags out to the car so they can begin their fun weekend
together." "Ok," replied Jesse, picking up two of the bags then continuing, "Hey

>Mark, I hear the fishing up there this time of year is great."

"Jesse!" Amanda
snapped, "I don't think these two are going to the mountains to fish. That's not

>very romantic." "I think fish are romantic," Jesse groveled. Mark and Maddie
just laughed as the four of them walked down the hall, out the door and to the

>car. Mr. X followed.
Jesse placed the bags he was carrying into Mark's trunk and said, "Amanda, let

>me have that bag so I can put it in here." Suddenly a beeping sound filled the
air. Amanda looked down at her beeper then said; "I've got to get back. You guys

>have a great time." She kissed Mark and Madison on the cheek and headed back
towards the door. She was looking at her beeper, not watching where she was

>going, when she ran into Mr. X. "Why don't you watch where you're going?" he
said angrily then hurried on. "I'm sorry! Maybe you could see better if you

>weren't wearing such dark shades," Amanda said loudly.
Jesse said his good-byes and Mark and Madison were off to their weekend in the

>mountains. They never noticed that they were being followed.
"Hi Eric," Mark said to the man behind the desk as he entered the lodging

>office. "Hey Mark. How are you?" the man returned his greeting. "I'm doing fine.
I've really been looking forward to this weekend. Were you able to get me into

>that cabin on the ridge by the lake?" Mark replied. "I sure did Mark. Here are
the keys. I hope you enjoy yourself. Oh by the way, I've just heard a weather

>update and it seems we could have a pretty good snowstorm tonight. You should
stop by that little store up on Ridge Road and get you some extra fire wood,"

>Eric told Mark as he handed him the keys. "I will," Mark said, "and thanks for
everything Eric." "Anytime Mark," Eric replied as Mark went out the door.

>Mark pulled into the parking lot at the Little Mountain Store. He and Madison
got out and went inside to pick up some last minute grocery items and extra

>firewood. Mr. X parked down the road and watched them.
"Wow, I can't believe we're finally here," Madison said as they pulled up to the

>cabin. She and Mark got out of the car and Madison continued, "This place is as
beautiful as you said it would be." She stood looking at the sun glimmering off

>the lake and Mark walked over and took her by the hand as they walked a little
closer to the lake. Mark said, "I can't believe you ever doubted me," smiling

>like a school kid who had just pleased his teacher. They stood together admiring
the natural beauty of the place until some clouds started overtaking the sun.

>"We better get the car unpacked," Mark said as they turned to head back towards
the cabin. Mr. X had stopped his car on the side of the road and now stood in

>the woods watching Mark and Madison, mentally planning what his next move would
be. He thought how convenient it was to have his target in a cabin in the middle

>of the woods. "Easy money," he laughed to himself.
As they entered the cabin, Madison said, "This is great! Why would anybody furnish a mountain cabin this nicely?" Mark replied, "It belongs to a wealthy
business man in Santa Monica who actually comes up here quite a bit. He wanted to make it homey. That's why I wasn't sure we would be in this cabin. He was
suppose to be here this weekend but something came up at the last minute. I've stayed here a few times before and I love it here." "I can see why," Madison
said happily.

>They spent the rest of the afternoon talking and preparing dinner, getting to
know each other better. After dinner, they washed the dishes, then went over by the fireplace and sat on the sofa and listened to the radio. One of the curtains
was slightly opened and they could see that snow was falling. Madison went over to the window and looked out, "Mark, it must have been snowing for some time. It
looks like there's about a foot of snow on the ground already." Mark walked over to look. "Wow, that's beautiful," he said smiling then continued, "We may just
be stuck here until it melts, for days, weeks, who knows." Madison laughed,

>"What shall we do?" Mark put his arm around Madison and led her back to the
sofa, "I think it's most important to stay warm." As they sat down on the sofa, they looked at each other for a moment and then began kissing each other. They
continued holding each other and kissing for awhile. Mark said, "I'm a little rusty at this. It's been awhile since I've been in a serious relationship."
Madison replied, "Me too, but I think we can figure it out. I understand it's like riding a bicycle." They both laughed and went back to kissing each other.
They were both becoming very aroused when suddenly there was a knock at the door.
They were both startled. Mark walked over to the door and loudly asked, "Who's there?" A voice came from outside, "My car broke down about a mile up the road
and I was walking down the road when I spotted the light in your windows." Mark cautiously opened the door and peeked out. He saw a man standing there covered
in snow. He opened the door and told the man to come in. As the man made his way in, Mark closed the door. When Mark turned around the man sucker punched Mark in
the stomach and Mark bent over double. Madison jumped up, "Hey what do you think you're doing?" Mr. X pulled a gun out from under his coat and pointed it at
Madison, "Stop right there. Sorry lady. You're at the wrong place at the wrong time. Now you go sit in one of those kitchen chairs and put your hands behind
you." Madison hesitated and said, "Let me see if he's ok." Mr. X cocked the gun and then kicked Mark in the ribs and Mark let out a yell. "Now go sit down," Mr.
X demanded. Madison went and sat in a chair. Mark rolled around on the floor clutching his abdomen. Mr. X walked over to a lamp, unplugged it and jerked the
cord loose. He took the cord and tied Madison's hands behind the back of the chair. She said, "Why are you doing this? Who are you and what has Mark done to
you?" "You ask too many questions lady. Now sit

there and shut up," Mr. X said
>as he walked back over to Mark. "Get up old man," he said as he grabbed Mark's
arm and pulled him up. He led Mark over to a kitchen chair about five feet away
>from Madison. This time he ripped the cord off of the toaster and tied Mark's
hands behind the chair. "What do you want?" Mark asked with twinges of pain in
>his voice. Mr. X said, "I'm just the hired hand Dr. Sloan." "For who and why?"
Mark asked. "For this," Mr. X said as he back handed Mark's face with his left
>hand and then his right hand. Mark yelled out in pain. Madison screamed, "STOP!"
Mr. X walked over and slapped Madison as hard as he could in the mouth and said
>angrily, "I told you to shut up woman." Madison began to cry as a trickle of
blood started rolling down the side of her mouth. Mark tried to get out of his
>chair and yelled, "Leave her alone! Your beef is with me not her." Mr. X walked
back over to Mark and said, "My my. You're a brave old fart aren't you?" as he
>back handed Mark again and again. Then he punched him in the gut several times.
He punched him in the left eye with his right hand and the chair toppled over.
>Mark moaned heavily with every hit. Madison cried uncontrollably, pleading with
Mr. X to leave Mark alone.
>He sat the chair back up with Mark in it and pulled Mark's head back so he could
get a good look at him. Mark's face was starting to swell, his left eye was red
>and blood trickled from his nose and mouth. He was barely conscious. Mr. X went
to his coat and took a digital camera from his pocket and took several pictures
>of Mark. He said, "Yeah, these are great doc. You're gonna make me a rich man."
Madison still had tears streaming down her cheeks. She quietly asked again, "Why
>are you doing this to him?" Mr. X replied, "Why can't you keep your mouth shut
lady?" "I just think we deserve an explanation," Madison said. "Ok," Mr. X said,
>"I'm doing it for money." "But why?" Madison asked.
Mr. X stared at Madison for several minutes then answered, "I guess it can't
>hurt to tell you since you won't make it out of this cabin alive. It seems the
doc's son put a mobster's dad in jail and he got beat up and then stabbed to
>death. Mr. D just wants to repay the doc's son." "So you're going to send those
pictures to Mark's son?" Madison asked. "I'm going to send these pictures to Mr.
>D and he will do with them whatever he wants." Mr. X looked at his watch then
said, "I'll call Mr. D in the morning. I'm going to get a little sleep. Don't go
>anywhere." He laughed as he put some logs on the fire and lay down on the sofa
to rest. Madison worked on getting her hands free. The cord had really cut into
>her wrists. She gazed over at Mark, who seemed to be in and out of
consciousness, and was more determined than ever to get loose.
>Jesse and Amanda walked into BBQ Bobs. "Hey Steve. How's business today?" Jesse
asked as he and Amanda sat at the bar. "Kinda slow this morning," Steve said as
>he poured them cups of hot coffee. "Umm, that hits the spot," Amanda said as she
took a sip from her cup then continued, "Have you heard from Mark?" "No," Steve

>said, "I've been thinking about calling and checking on them. I saw on the
weather that there was quite a snow storm up in the mountains." "I think you
should Steve. For some reason I've had a funny feeling about them since they
left yesterday," Amanda said. "Oh Amanda, your just being paranoid," Jesse
>chimed in, "I bet they're having a great time all snowed in together, cuddled up
together by the fireplace to keep warm." Steve rolled his eyes at Jesse, "Ok
>Jesse. We get the picture but I think I'll try dad on his cell phone for my own
peace of mind." Steve picked up the phone and dialed Mark's number. "Hmm," Steve
>grunted, "the operator came on after several rings and said the cell customer
you're trying to reach is not answering. It's not like dad to have his cell
phone on and not answer it." "I have Madison's cell phone number somewhere here
in my purse," Amanda said as she fumbled for her address book. "Here it is. Try
>this number," she said as she handed Steve the address book. "Same thing," Steve
said, "something's not right. I'm going to call Eric Davis at the lodge office
>and ask him if he's seen them." Steve took out his wallet and found the phone
number. "Eric, hi, this is Steve Sloan." "Fine, how are you?" "That's great.
>Eric, have you seen my dad?" "You say they checked in around 4:00pm yesterday.
I'm just a little concerned because I tried to call him and he's not answering
>his phone. I think I may ride up there." "My truck is a four wheel drive so I
think I can make it." "Ok, thanks Eric. Bye." "Eric said we should wait a couple
>of hours to let the sun melt some of the snow. He's not sure we can make it up
to the cabin that dad rented," Steve said to Amanda and Jesse.
>Madison had managed to free her hands but decided to stay where she was and not
make her move until the right time. Mr. X woke up when a streak of sunlight came
>thru a part in the curtains and warmed his face. He got up and threw a few more
logs on the fire. He saw that Madison was awake but the doc still seemed to be
>out of it. "Hello sunshine," he said to Madison as he walked over to Mark and
slapped him in the face a few times. "Wake up doc," he said to Mark. Mark just
>let out a couple of groans. "Leave him alone," Madison begged. "You hush up
little lady. I'm just gonna take a couple more pictures of your boyfriend. He
>looks much worse this morning than he did last night. I think Mr. D will like
these pictures even better," he remarked as he snapped a couple more pictures of
>Mark. "Don't you think he's suffered enough?" Madison asked. "I guess," Mr. X
said as he walked towards Madison, "but you haven't. I think the least I could
>do for the doc is see that you have a good time. Don't you?" "Don't touch me!"
Madison said angrily as she tried to keep calm, knowing that this wasn't the
>right time to show that her hands were free. She knew she couldn't overpower
him, she would have to somehow attack him by surprise. Mr. X began to kiss
>Madison on the neck. "STOP!" she said firmly, but he continued. "I don't have
to," he laughed as he tried to kiss her on the lips. She spat in his face. He

>backhanded her across the face. "You want to play rough, we'll play rough," he
said as he ripped Madison's shirt open. She turned her head and closed her eyes
>as he took a knife from his pocket and cut the front of her bra into. He grabbed
both of her breasts and squeezed them tightly. She could feel his fingernails
>tearing into her skin and tears streamed down her face. Suddenly Mr. X's cell
phone started ringing, "Damn it!" he yelled. He grabbed Madison's face and said,
>"I'll be right back." Madison let out a small sigh of relief and listened to Mr. X's end of his conversation.
>"X here." "Hey Mr. D." "Yes I have your pictures." "I'll have to go out to my car to email them to you. I've got one of those laptops linked via my cell
>service. I'll just hook my camera up to it and you should have them in 15 to 20 minutes." "Ok Mr. D. I'll be waiting to hear from you to finish him off."
>"Don't go anywhere baby. I'll be back in a few minutes and we can take up where we left off," Mr. X said to Madison as he winked at her. She turned her head in
>disgust. Mr. X picked up the camera put on his coat and went out the door. Madison waited a couple of minutes to make sure he wasn't coming back and then
>she jumped up and dashed for the bedroom as she knew she didn't have much time. She grabbed her purse and pulled out a handgun she had bought. She took bullets
>from a small box in her purse and loaded the gun. She quickly went back into the living room where Mark was. She went over to him and lifted his head with one hand. He was semi-conscious. She said, "Hold on Mark. It won't be long now." She kissed him on the forehead as a tear ran down her cheek and landed on his face.
>She gently brushed the tear away and then went back and assumed her position in the chair where she had been tied. She gripped the gun in her right hand and put her arms back behind the chair as if she were still tied up and waited for Mr. X to come back.
>"Are you Steve Sloan?" the courier said to Jesse. "No. Just a minute," Jesse replied, "Hey Steve. You have a letter up here you need to sign for." Steve came
>out of the kitchen and over to the cash register where the courier stood. He signed for the large envelope and tipped the courier. The courier left as Steve
>looked at the address on the envelope and tore into it. "Oh God," Steve said loudly and continued, "Amanda, see if you can stop that courier." Amanda darted
>out the door of BBQ Bobs and looked for the courier but he was already gone. She went back in and said, "No luck Steve. He was already gone. What's wrong?"
>"Yeah, what is wrong Steve? You look a little pale," Jesse chimed in. "Look," Steve said as he threw the pictures on the counter where Jesse and Amanda could
>see them. "Oh my God! It's Mark," Amanda said as a few tears fell down her face. "I knew something was wrong. I just had a gut feeling---plus the fact that dad
>nor Madison answered their cell phones," Steve said angrily. "We've got to find them Steve," Jesse said as he pulled his apron off and tossed it on the counter.
>"You're right Jess," Steve said as he took another look at the pictures. Jesse picked up the ringing phone, "BBQ Bobs." "Steve

it's for you," Jesse said as he handed Steve the phone. "Sloan here." "Who are you?" "What...what do you want
from me?" "I swear if my father dies, I'll hunt you down like a mad dog and put >a bullet thru your sorry ass scull." Steve hung up the phone. "We've got to find
them guys," Steve said with great urgency in his voice. "What did the caller say?" Jesse questioned. "He said how does it feel to have your father beat all
to hell and there's nothing you can do about it? He said he didn't want anything >from me. He just wants me to suffer the same way he did...until my father dies,"
Steve said as his voice started to crack. "He also said if I contact the station >about this, he will kill dad instantly," Steve added. "Steve, do you recognize
the room your dad is in in these pictures?" Amanda asked. "Yes, that's a cabin >he's rented several times. It's way up in the mountains. I've been there with
him before," Steve answered as he studied the pictures. "Let's go," Jesse said.

>They all headed out and got in Steve's truck.
Mr. X came back in and took his coat off. He put several more logs on the fire >and stood by the fireplace warming his cold body. Madison watched him carefully and
waited for the right moment to try and overtake him. "Well little lady, did you >miss me? I think I've warmed up enough to get back to what we were doing before
we were interrupted. I know your probably hot just thinking about it aren't >you?" he said as he started walking towards Madison. As he approached, Madison
brought her hands around in front of her and grasped the gun with both hands and >pointed it straight at Mr. X. "Stop or I'll shoot," Madison called out
nervously. Mr. X stopped for a moment and replied, "You don't have the guts to >shoot me lady." He lunged toward Madison and she started firing. She didn't stop
until the gun was empty. Mr. X fell to the floor. Madison let the gun fall to >the floor as she sat breathing heavily and sobbing, her face buried in her
hands.

>"Maddie," Mark called quietly. Madison looked up to see that Mark was conscious.
She got up and went over to him and untied his hands. "Mark, I didn't realize >you were conscious," Madison said. "I have been for a short time," Mark answered
as Madison helped him out of the chair and into the bedroom and on to the bed.

>"Lie back and let me check you out," Madison said as Mark laid down, moaning
with every movement.

>"Steve, do you know who would do this?" Amanda asked as they rode along. "He
said he wanted me to suffer like him. Amanda, I guess there's alot of people who >think I've made them suffer for crimes they've committed. It could be any of
them," Steve answered. "Then why take it out on Mark? I mean why not just beat >you up instead of your dad?" Jesse asked. "I see what you mean," Amanda said
then continued, "Steve, maybe this is a family member or friend of someone >you've arrested or maybe someone you shot. Can you think of anyone like that?"
"I don't know. I'll have to go back and look thru my files Amanda," Steve said

>as they drove by the lodging office. "It's just a few more miles up this road,"
Steve said. "The road conditions keep getting worse

Steve. Do you think we can
>make it?" Jesse questioned. "We have to. Oh, damn it," Steve said as they slid
off into a ditch. "Why'd you have to say that Jesse?" Amanda snapped. "What?"
>It's not my fault. I was just commenting on my observations," Jesse said. "Come
on Jess, let's see if we can get this thing back on the road. You stir Amanda,"
>Steve said as he opened the door and climbed out.
"You look pretty bad Mark," Madison said as she looked Mark over. "Thanks alot,"
>Mark said trying to lighten things up a little. "Your eye is swollen shut, your
nose and mouth are both busted on the edges, and you have a mild concussion,"
>Madison said as she gently turned his head from side to side. She unbuttoned and
opened his shirt and examined his torso. "It feels like you've got a couple of
>cracked ribs and your body is very badly bruised," she said as Mark winced when
she touched the area around his ribs. A tear ran down her cheek as she looked at
>Mark. Mark reached up and took one side of Madison's shirt which was still open
from Mr. X's attack and asked, "Maddie, did he..."
"No," she stopped him before
>he could finish asking. "He was going to but thank God the phone interrupted
him." Mark pulled open Madison's shirt and exposed her bruised and scratched
>breasts. A tear rolled down Mark's cheek and he said, "I'm sorry I got you in
this mess Maddie. I'm sorry he hurt you." "Mark, this was not your fault. We
>were just victims of some crazy man out for revenge against Steve. And believe
me, if I had to go thru it all again I would if it meant saving you. I love you
>Mark," Madison said as she took Mark's hand and gently kissed it. "I love you
too Maddie," Mark said as he managed a slight smile.
"Let me get my bag and
>doctor that face a little," Madison said as she went for her medical bag. She
also got a warm cloth and a cloth filled with ice. She put the ice pack on
>Mark's eye and told him to hold it there while she carefully wiped the dried
blood away from his nose and mouth. "I'm going to give you a shot of pain killer
>in the abdomen Mark. I don't want to give you anything too strong because of the
concussion," Madison said as she reached in her bag for a syringe and vile of
>painkiller. "Whatever you say doc. I trust your judgement," Mark responded. "I
hope you don't have any internal injuries. That could be big trouble if we can't
>get out of here soon," Madison said as she stuck the needle in Mark's mid
section. Mark gritted his teeth as she emptied the syringe into him. "I think
>I'm going to wrap your ribs too," Madison said as she searched her bag and
Mark's bag for some ace bandages. She found the bandages and wrapped Mark's ribs
>tight. "I'm going to change shirts and then see if I can get us out of here,"
Madison remarked.
>"It's no use Steve, this truck is just too far off the road for the two of us to
push it back on the road in this icy slush," Jesse said as he rested on the tail
>gate. "I think your right Jess. Put it in park," Steve yelled to Amanda then
continued as Amanda got out of the truck and joined them, "Are you guys up to

>walking the rest of the way. It's at least a couple of miles, maybe more?"
"We've got to Steve. We don't know exactly how bad Mark is hurt and we don't

>know anything about Madison," Amanda answered. "Let's go," Jesse chimed in. So
off they continued on foot.

>"Mark, how are you feeling?" Madison asked as she came back into the bedroom
where Mark had been resting. "Like an old worn out punching bag," Mark replied

>with a slight grin. "It looks like the ice helped your eye. It looks more like
an eye now," Madison said. "It still hurts like hell," Mark responded then

>continued, "Any chance of getting us out of here?" "Well, both of our cell
phones are dead. I went out and surveyed the road. It's still pretty much frozen

>over but I think it'll be much better in an hour or two because the sun is
really beaming down on it. So maybe we'll be able to leave in a little while,"

>Madison answered. "Maddie come lay down beside me and rest for the next hour or
so until we can leave," Mark said. Madison did as Mark asked. He said, "Maddie

>will you hold me? I'm cold." "Sure Mark," Madison said as she opened her arms
and Mark snuggled up next to her. She kissed him on top of the head. "Thanks for

>being here with me Maddie," Mark said. "I can't think of anywhere else I'd
rather be or anyone else I'd rather be with Mark," Madison said as she and Mark

>both drifted off to sleep.
"How much further Steve?" Amanda asked then continued, "We've been walking for

>about 2 hours." "You see that smoke up ahead? That's it," Steve answered. "Thank
God," Jesse said, "I don't think my frozen feet could make it much further."

>"There's dad's car and that must be the car that belongs to his attacker," Steve
observed then continued, "Let's try and take a look inside the windows and

>assess the situation instead of just barging in." "Let's go," Amanda said.
"Steve, Amanda," Jesse quietly called. They both went over to where Jesse was.

>"There's a body lying on the floor behind the sofa but I can't see enough of it
to know if it's Mark or Madison," Jesse said as he stepped back from the window

>so the others could have a look. Steve then Amanda looked into the slight
opening of the curtains in the window and saw what Jesse had seen. There were no

>signs of life visible. "Ok guys. I'm going in first and you two follow me,"
Steve said as he drew his weapon and approached the cabin door. He turned the

>door knob and cautiously entered the cabin with Jesse and Amanda right behind
him. They quietly walked over to the body and looked at each other relieved that

>it wasn't Mark or Madison. Jesse felt for a pulse. "He's dead," Jesse mouthed.
Steve looked around the room and saw the chairs with the cords on the floor

>beside them. He saw the gun lying on the floor beside one of the chairs. He
quietly and cautiously moved toward the bedroom door. He held his gun out in

>front of him and quickly turned the corner to look in the bedroom. He saw his
dad and Madison lying on the bed together. He lowered his gun to his side as he

>stood looking at them for a moment, making sure they were breathing. He put his
weapon away and looked back at Amanda and Jesse and

said quietly, "They're in
>here guys." Amanda and Jesse both stepped into the doorway with Steve as they
all stood there looking at Mark and Madison. "Thank God," Amanda whispered.

>Madison woke up and saw them all standing in the doorway. She smiled at them and
they smiled back. Then she started to cry as she gently woke Mark up and said,

>"I think we've got company." "Steve, Amanda, Jesse. Boy are we glad to see you,"
Mark said. Madison got up and walked over to them and hugged each one of them as

>she continued to sob. Amanda and Jesse went over to Mark and started checking
out his injuries. Madison and Steve walked into the living room where Mr. X's

>body lay. "Tell me what happened Madison. I don't recognize this guy on the
floor. Why was he out for revenge? I don't think I ever did anything to him,"

>Steve inquired. "Steve, this guy was a hired hit man. He's not the one that was
out for revenge. He called himself Mr. X," Madison told him. Steve reached into

>his pockets and found a driver's license. "Trent Alexander is what it says on
his license. I don't recognize the name. Maybe someone at the station knows

>about him. Madison did he ever give any indication who he was working for?"
Steve asked. "Yes," Madison answered then continued, "He said you had arrested a

>mobster's dad who was beaten and stabbed to death in jail. He called him Mr. D."
"Lenny Defranco," Steve said angrily. "Do you know him?" Madison asked. "Yes. I

>did arrest his father and he was killed in jail...by a rival mob. Lenny wouldn't
accept that and he blamed me. I'm gonna kill his sorry ass when I get my hands

>on him," Steve answered. "How's dad doing?" Steve asked. "He's holding his own
Steve. He's tough but we need to get him to the hospital in case there are

>internal injuries," Madison said as tears streamed down her face. "You shot Mr.
X didn't you?" Steve asked. Madison nodded her head and then lowered it as she

>continued to cry. Steve walked over and hugged Madison tightly and said, "You
did the right thing Madison. He would have killed you and dad if you hadn't

>killed him first. I don't want you to regret that decision." "Oh Steve. I'm a
doctor. I'm suppose to save people not kill them," Madison cried. "You saved my

>dad and yourself. You did the right thing," Steve said as he consoled her.
"Thank you Steve," Madison said as she began to regain control of her emotions.

>Jesse joined Steve and Madison in the living room. Mark asked Amanda to stay
behind with him a minute. "Amanda, Madison has some injuries I want you to look

>at. She's stubborn and won't tell you about them," Mark said. "I saw her wrists.
They look pretty bad," Amanda replied. "Not her wrists," Mark said then

>continued, "It's her breasts." "Her breasts?" Amanda questioned. "Yes. That guy
was attempting to rape her but thank God he was interrupted. He had ripped open

>her shirt and when she was helping me to the bed I saw them. They're very
bruised and have some gashes in them," Mark said as he choked back some tears.

>"I'll check her out Mark," Amanda assured him. "Thanks Amanda," Mark said then
added, "Just be discrete about it. She's very modest

when it comes to stuff like

>that. "I will. Don't worry Mark," Amanda said as she kissed Mark on the forehead
and went into the living room to join the others.

>"Amanda, how's dad?" Steve asked as she walked over to where Steve, Jesse, and
Madison were standing. "He's stable," Amanda said as she stared at Mr. X lying

>on the floor. "What is it Amanda," Jesse asked. "Not that it matters now, but I
just realized that he's the guy I ran into as I was going back into the hospital

>when Mark and Madison were leaving. He must have followed you guys from the
hospital," Amanda said. "I guess he did," Madison said then continued, "We were

>so excited about this trip that we didn't even notice him." "Amanda, I've called
this in to the station and they're sending up a squad car, the coroner's van,

>and an ambulance," Steve said. "Good. Mark really needs to get to the hospital
for a thorough exam," Amanda remarked.

>Steve said, "I'm going in to see dad. Could you guys give us some time alone?"
"Sure," they all answered in unison. "We'll be right here if you need us Steve,"

>Madison added.
Steve walked over and sat down on the bed by Mark. He took his dad's hand and

>they stared silently at each other for a moment. "Dad.." "Steve," Mark cut him
off, "I'm gonna be fine son. This wasn't your fault." "Dad, remember when mom

>made me that Superman suit when I was a kid. I loved that thing. I never wanted
to take it off. I thought I was Superman. And remember how you and I used to sit

>and watch the Superman show on TV together. I thought nobody could hurt Superman
and you told me that Lex Luther was evil but clever and he'd find a way to get

>to Superman. Sure enough, Lex Luther kidnapped Superman's parents and made
Superman do things he wouldn't normally have done for Lex Luther. But in the

>end, Superman rescued his parents and so Superman prevailed over the evil Lex
Luther. When I graduated from the academy and received this badge, I thought I

>was Superman all over again. I wanted to keep everyone safe from the Lex Luthers
of the world. But now I know there are too many Lex Luthers in this world and it

>eats me up inside that I can't always protect the people I love from them.
Especially you dad. I hate this guy for hurting you. I'm just no Superman dad."

>"Son, Superman always prevailed because he didn't let his emotions make him do
things he would regret later. He didn't let Lex Luther drive him to violence.

>Let someone else go pick up this Mr. D. Don't do anything you'll regret for the
rest of your life. I want him punished just as much as you do, but I don't want

>to lose you in the process. Now promise me you won't do anything crazy."
"I won't dad," Steve said as he brushed Mark's hair back and kissed him on the

>forehead, "You get some rest. An ambulance should be here soon."

"Jesse, let's go outside and see how the road's looking and check out Mr. X's

>car," Steve said as he walked back into the living room and put his coat on.
"Sure Steve," Jesse said as he grabbed his coat.

>"I'm glad they left us alone," Amanda commented to Madison. "Why,"

Madison
questioned. "Mark told me about Mr. X attacking you," Amanda answered. "He >shouldn't have," Madison stated angrily. "Yes he should have," Amanda said then
continued, "Now let me have a look." "It's nothing Amanda. I'll be fine," >Madison protested. "I promised Mark. You know I'm not giving up until you let me
check you out," Amanda insisted. Madison let out a heavy sigh and said, "Oh >alright." She sat down in a chair and unbuttoned her shirt. "These are some
nasty looking wounds Madison. Exactly what did he do," Amanda questioned. Tears >began to roll down Madison's cheeks, "He just grabbed me and squeezed and
twisted and dug his claws into me." "It's ok," Amanda squeezed Madison's hand, >"I'm going to get your bag and get some antiseptic ointment and bandages out of
it and fix you up. We don't want you getting an infection. I think we need to do >the same for your wrists." Madison nodded and Amanda retrieved the bag from the
bedroom. She dressed Madison's wounds and said, "You're gonna need to keep an >eye on your breasts. You should get an exam and probably a mammogram in a couple
of weeks, when the soreness wears off. I think you may want to consider seeing >one of the counselors at CG also. I can see that this has been an emotionally
draining experience for you as it would have been for anyone. Just think about >it." "You're probably right. Thanks Amanda," Madison replied. "You know, this is
the kind of thing that friends are for," Amanda said as she gave Madison a >much-needed hug.
Steve and Jesse were looking thru Mr. X's belongings in his car. "Steve, what >exactly are we looking for," Jesse asked. "Anything that will tell us where to
find Lenny Defranco," Steve answered. "What are you going to do to him when you >find him?" Jesse questioned. "I'm not exactly sure Jess. My instincts tell me to
kill the bastard, but my dad's voice keeps chiming in to just arrest him," Steve >answered. "Hey, here's a laptop. I'll try and look at his files and see if
there's any info in here," Jesse said then continued, "You know Steve, I think >of Mark as a father and it really makes me angry to see him hurt like he is. But
I also think of you as a big brother and best friend so I couldn't bear it if >you got hurt or arrested either. Maybe Mark is right. You should just arrest him
and be done with it." "Great. Now I can add your voice chiming in with dads," >Steve said. "Bingo!" Jesse said. "You got something," Steve asked. "No, he has
bingo on this laptop and I just bingo'd," Jesse laughed. Steve rolled his eyes. >"I'm just kidding Steve. Mr. X has quite a file here on your Lenny Defranco,
including his address." "Great work Jess. If your good I'll buy you your very >own bingo game," Steve said laughing but gratefully. "One thing Steve. I won't
give you this info unless you agree to let me go with you to arrest Defranco," >Jesse said. "But Jess," Steve quipped. "No buts," Jesse said as he closed the
laptop. "Ok," Steve said, "But you have to let me do all the dirty work." "Fair >enough," Jesse said with that boyish grin on his face.
Madison walked over to the bedroom door and looked in on Mark. "Maddie, come

sit

>with me," Mark said when he saw Madison standing in the doorway. "I thought you
were sleeping," Madison said as she made her way to the bed and sat down by

>Mark. "How you holding up?" Madison said as she took Mark's hand and gently
rubbed it. "I'm hurting pretty bad around the ribs but I'll be ok. How about you

>Maddie?" Madison shook her head and said, "I'm a bit tired but I'm hanging in
there." Mark held their hands up slightly and said, "I see Amanda fixed your

>wrists up." "Yes and you can relax. She took a look at my chest also and fixed
that up for me as well," Madison said as she leaned down and kissed Mark. "Hey,

>what was that for," Mark asked teasingly. "For caring about me," Madison
answered and continued, "and because I love you so much." "Hey listen. Finally.

>Sirens. It's about time they got here," Madison said as she stood up and walked
into the living room with Amanda.

>The police and ambulance arrived. Madison and Amanda rode in the ambulance with
Mark. Jesse and Steve stayed behind to try and get Steve's truck out of the

>ditch and to drive Mark's car back.
Steve and Jesse arrived at the beach house. Jesse parked Mark's car in the

>driveway and got out. "Come on. Get in," Steve called to Jesse. Jesse climbed in
the truck with Steve. "I'm going by the station to see if the arrest warrant is

>ready for Lenny Defranco. Hopefully it is. We'll take a couple of uniforms with
us and get this over with. The more I think about what he did to dad the more

>angry I get," Steve said as they drove toward the precinct. "Look Steve, I'm
angry too but you have to keep a clear head. Don't let your anger get the best

>of you," Jesse stated. "I won't Jesse. I'm a professional," Steve said as he
grinned slightly.

>"Mark, you are so lucky," Amanda said then continued, "Your x-rays and other
test results show that you have 3 broken ribs but no other broken bones or

>internal injuries." Madison, who was sitting next to Mark holding his hand,
said, "Thank God. I was afraid Mr. X may have ruptured something the way he was

>kicking and beating you." "It's because of all those crunches I've been doing.
Yes, my body runs like a well oiled machine," Mark said as they all laughed.

>At Lenny Defranco's house, Steve, Jesse and the two uniformed officers were
approaching the house. "You guys go around back in case he tries to slip out on

>us," Steve told the two officers. He gave them time to get in place then he
knocked on the door. One of Defranco's bodyguards came to the door. "Yeah," he

>said. Steve showed his badge to the man and said, "We're here to see Lenny
Defranco." The guy slammed the door in Steve's face. Steve drew his weapon and

>busted the door in. The bodyguard started firing as Steve managed to get out of
the way but Jesse was hit right in the abdomen. The uniformed officers came thru

>the back door and one of them shot the bodyguard in the arm and then took his
gun from him. Steve had spotted Defranco dashing up the stairs. "You guys check

>on Jesse. I'm going after Defranco," Steve said to the officers as he headed up
the stairs. Defranco had gone out onto a second

story balcony and was jumping

>down when Steve spotted him again. Steve jumped from the balcony and chased
Defranco down and tackled him. They wrestled around for a bit, exchanging

>punches. Finally Steve got the upper hand and punched him about 5 times when all
of a sudden someone grabbed his arm from behind.

"Steve don't," he heard as he

>turned around to see that Jesse had his arm. Steve dropped his head for a moment
and then said, "You're right Jess." Jesse let his arm go. Steve handcuffed

>Defranco and read him his rights as he and Jesse escorted Defranco to the
uniformed officers. "Thank God for these bullet proof vests," Jesse said. Steve

>just laughed and shook his head. "Thank God indeed," he said as he put his hand
on Jesse's shoulder and said, "Come on. Let's go to the hospital and see how dad

>and Madison are."
"Maddie go home and get some rest. I know you're exhausted. Also, I'm sorry this

>weekend didn't turn out the way I'd planned. I promise it'll go much better next
time..that is if you'll go with me next time," Mark said. Madison smiled, "Is

>that an invitation?" "You bet," Mark said as he returned the smile.

"You just
let me know when your ready," Madison said as she stood up and leaned down and

>kissed Mark. "I love you Maddie," Mark said. Madison cupped Mark's cheek in her
palm and stared into his beautiful blue eyes. "I love you too Mark," she said as

>she kissed him again more passionately. "I'm gonna go. I'll see you tomorrow,"
she whispered as she breathed heavily. "I hope you get some rest," Mark said. "I

>hope you do too. Good night Mark," she said as she headed for the door. "Good
night Maddie," Mark replied.

>"Hey dad," Steve said as he approached Mark's bed, "How are you feeling?" "A
little better," Mark answered then asked, "Did you find Defranco?" "Yes we

>did..and before you ask, he's still alive. I did hit him several times but Jesse
helped me realize he wasn't worth killing. You'd have been proud of us both,"

>Steve answered. "Also, Defranco's body guard is singing like a canary. Seems we
may be able to pin a lot of charges on Mr. D," Steve added. "That's great Steve.

>I hope he's out of our lives for good," Mark said. "How's Madison?" Steve asked.
"She was exhausted so I finally convinced her to go home," Mark answered.

>"Good," Steve said then continued, "I'm glad you two are gonna be all right.
I've got to go to the station and do some paperwork. I'll see you in the morning

>dad." "Ok Steve," Mark said. Mark watched his son to the door and said, "Steve."
"Yeah dad," Steve said as he stopped and looked back at Mark. "I think Superman

>came thru today," Mark said. Steve smiled and said "Thanks dad."

Six Weeks Later

>"Dad, I hate going to these charity functions," Steve said as his dad helped him
with his bow tie. "I would think you would be use to it by now," Mark said. "Is

>Madison going to make it?" Steve asked. "Yes, she called me from the airport and
said she would meet us there. Her plane came in a little late so she said she

>would probably be late to the ball. I'm sure glad she's back. The last three
weeks have seemed like an eternity," Mark answered.

"I'm glad she's back too.

>Maybe you'll stop moping around now," Steve laughed.
"Hey Amanda, Jesse," Mark greeted his co-workers. "Hey Mark. I just love getting

>all dressed up for these events," Amanda said. "You would," Jesse quipped. "You
look lovely Amanda," Steve chimed in. "Is Madison going to make it Mark?" Amanda

>asked. "Yes but she's running late. I haven't seen her yet," Mark replied. "I
think she really needed the time away after that ordeal you guys went thru at

>that cabin. That dean's convention was probably a god-send," Amanda said.
"You're right Amanda. She really sounded good when I talked to her earlier,"

>Mark replied.
Madison had entered the ball room and saw Mark across the way talking with a

>group of people. She couldn't wait to see him. She just stood a few moments
admiring him from afar. A band was playing softly in the background and a singer

>was making his way to the stage. Madison stopped him and asked him if he would
dedicate a song. He agreed.

>"Ladies and gentlemen. Can I have your attention please?" the singer said then
continued, "I have a special request for this next song. It's dedicated from

>Madison to Mark. I would like to have Madison and Mark make their way to the
middle of the dance floor for the first dance of the evening."

>Mark looked across the room and saw Madison. She was wearing a blue sequin gown
that accented her flaming red hair and deep blue eyes. He smiled at her and she

>smiled back. They made their way to the middle of the dance floor. She thought
how wonderfully handsome Mark look in his classic tuxedo. When they met, Mark

>said, "My God your beautiful. Maddie I've missed you so much." Madison said, "Oh
Mark I've missed you more. You look incredibly handsome tonight."

>The music started and Mark held out his arms to dance and Madison moved right
into place as the singer began to sing. There was a time I was everything and

>nothing all in one When you found me I was feeling like a cloud across the sun
I need to tell you How you light up every second of the day But in the moonlight

>You just shine like a beacon on the bay
And I can't explain But it's something about the way you look tonight Takes my

>breath away It's that feeling I get about you, deep inside And I can't describe
But it's something about the way you look tonight Takes my breath away The way

>you look tonight
With a smile You pull the deepest secrets from my heart In all honesty I'm

>speechless and I don't know where to start
They danced as the singer sang on but they were lost in each other's eyes. When >the song finished, Mark said, "I love you Maddie." Madison answered, "I love you
too Mark."

>All constructive feedback welcomed. Deb122560@aol.com <div>

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file.